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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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Memorandum of Conversation

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DATE: November 4, 1959

SUBJECT: Preparations for Western Summit

PARTICIPANTS: Mr. Horst W. Osterheld, First Secretary, German Embassy  
Mr. Martin J. Hillenbrand - GER

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Mr. Osterheld dropped in on a fishing expedition, or as he described it, to discuss several points arising out of the Secretary's meeting with the French, British and German Ambassadors yesterday which had not been covered and in which Ambassador Grewe was interested.

The first question was whether the State Department has been preparing any new proposals on Berlin. Mr. Hillenbrand said that, while we had been giving thought to the problem, we had no very specific ideas at the present time. Good new ideas were not easy to come by. We hoped that if any one of the other three countries had any ideas in this category they would emerge during the forthcoming Working Group sessions. Mr. Osterheld observed that, within a few days, a communication from Foreign Minister von Brentano would be coming for the Secretary, apparently the result of an earlier request for German thinking on the Berlin problem. As far as he was aware, this would not add anything to the German view that the Western proposals of July 28, as made at Geneva, represented the outermost limits beyond which the West should not go. In fact, the feeling of many Germans was that these proposals had already gone too far.

In response to Mr. Osterheld's query as to the timing of the initial Working Group meeting, Mr. Hillenbrand noted that the French Embassy had apparently first wanted to obtain instructions about participation in such a meeting. Mr. Osterheld said his understanding was that the French, as well as the British,

merely wanted

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merely wanted to inquire if experts should be sent from the respective Foreign Offices to assist the Embassies here. Grewe had apparently queried the Foreign Office in Bonn in the same sense. Mr. Hillenbrand said that we had not yet thought of a special date for the first meeting but that the three Embassies would undoubtedly be hearing from Mr. Kohler shortly in this connection.

Mr. Hillenbrand took the occasion to note the desirability of avoiding heavy press interest in the Working Group proceedings by playing down the idea that formalized and regular meetings were being held here. Once the press got this impression they would be hanging around hoping to pick up something new each day. Mr. Hillenbrand pointed out that, in our press guidance on yesterday's meeting, we were merely saying that the four Ambassadors had been called in to begin preparations for the Western Heads of Governments meeting and that representatives of the Foreign Governments would meet from time to time to continue these preparations.

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